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Media Relations

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UNH Research Finds Participation in School Nutrition Programs Falls Below Expectations

DURHAM, N.H. – With legislation on select child nutrition programs up for reauthorization before Sept. 30, new research at the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire finds that only moderate numbers of eligible households take advantage of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs.

Analysis of Current Population Survey data from 2013 shows only 64 percent of eligible households participate in the National School Lunch Program and 52 percent participate in the School Breakfast Program.

“Additional children already qualify and could be benefiting both nutritionally and academically from participation,” said researcher Jessica Carson. In addition, she found that participation rates were higher in cities than in suburban or rural areas and that southern households were the most likely to participate in the School Breakfast Program.

“With reauthorization upcoming, policymakers might consider ways to increase participation, especially in rural places where large shares of households are eligible, and participation rates are relatively low.”

The full analysis can be found here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/child-school-nutrition-programs>

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 13,000 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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